

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for enabling the execution of I/O operations by at least a host on at least a production storage element while producing an updated snapshot copy of said production storage element, said method comprises the steps of:

a) on-line performing a write request initiated by said host by writing a new data chunk to a journal and saving a destination address designated in said write request in a changes table, wherein while on-line performing said write request the host is idle;

b) generating a response message ending the execution of said write request and thereby enabling said host to execute said I/O operations;

c) off-line producing said updated snapshot copy of said production storage element by:
copying a data chunk residing in said production storage element at a location designated by ~~a~~the destination address to a location designated by ~~the~~a destination address in a snapshot storage element; and

copying said new data chunk from said journal to a location designated by said destination address in said production storage element;

wherein while off-line producing said updated snapshot copy said host is released to handle said I/O operations.

2. - 4. (Cancelled)

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said journal includes at least one non-volatile random access memory (NVRAM) unit.

6.-8 (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein off-line producing said updated snapshot copy further comprises the steps of:

a) checking using said changes table if said data chunk residing in said snapshot storage element at the destination address was modified since a last time that said updated snapshot copy was updated; and

b)

copying said new data chunk from said journal to said production storage element, if said data chunk at the destination address has been modified.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein said location in said production storage element is determined by said destination address.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said destination address is converted to a physical address if said production storage element is a virtual volume.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said I/O operations comprise a read request initiated by the host computer.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein executing said read request comprises the steps of:

a) checking if a data chunk requested to be read resides in said journal;

b) retrieving said data chunk from said journal and further sending said data chunk to said host, if said data chunk resides in said journal; and

c) retrieving said data chunk from said production storage element and further sending said data chunk to said host, if said data chunk does not reside in said journal.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein checking if said data chunk resides in said journal further comprises the step of:

checking whether the changes table includes an entry associated with said data chunk.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said data chunk is retrieved from a location designated by a source address included in said read request.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein said source address is converted to a physical address if said production storage element is a virtual volume.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer executable code enabling the execution of I/O operations by at least a host on at least a production storage element while producing an updated snapshot copy of said production storage element, said executable code for performing the steps of:

a) on-line performing a write request initiated by said host by writing a new data chunk to a journal and saving a destination address designated in said write request in a changes table, wherein while on-line performing said write request the host is idle;

b) generating a response message ending the execution of said write request and thereby enabling said host to execute said I/O operations;

c) off-line producing said updated snapshot copy of said production storage element by:

 copying a data chunk residing in said production storage element at ~~the~~ a location designated by a destination address to a location designated by ~~a~~ the destination address in a snapshot storage element; and

 copying said new data chunk from said journal to a location designated by said destination address in said production storage element;

wherein while off-line producing said updated snapshot copy said host is released to handle said I/O operations.

19. - 21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The ~~computer-readable medium computer-executable code~~ of claim 18, wherein said journal includes at least one non-volatile random access memory (NVRAM) unit.

23. - 25 (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium ~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 24, wherein off-line producing said updated snapshot copy further comprises the steps of:

a) checking using said changes table if said data chunk resides in said snapshot storage element at the destination address was modified since a last time that said updated snapshot copy was updated; and

b) copying said new data chunk from said journal to said production storage element, if said data chunk at the destination address has been modified.

27. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium ~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 26, wherein said location in said production storage element is determined by said destination address.

28. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium ~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 27, wherein said destination address is converted to a physical address if said production storage element is a virtual volume.

29. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium ~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 18, wherein said I/O operations comprise a read request by the host.

30. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium ~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 29, wherein executing said read request further comprises the steps of:

a) checking if a data chunk requested to be read resides in said journal;

b) retrieving said data chunk from said journal and further sending said data chunk to said host, if said data chunk resides in said journal; and

c) retrieving said data chunk from said storage element and further sending said data chunk to said host, if said data chunk does not reside in said journal.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 30, wherein checking if said data chunk resides in said journal further includes:

checking whether the changes table includes an entry associated with said data chunk.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 31, wherein said data chunk is retrieved from a location designated by a source address included in said read request.

34. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium~~computer-executable code~~ of claim 33, wherein said source address is converted to a physical address if said production storage element is a virtual volume.

35. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for execution of I/O operations with by at least a host on at least a production storage element while an producing an updated snapshot copy of said production storage element, said apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a write request operation from said host;

means for on-line performing said write request by writing a new data chunk to a journal and saving a destination address designated in said write request in a changes table, wherein while on-line performing said write request the host is idle;

means for off-line producing said updated snapshot copy of said production storage element by copying a data chunk residing in said production storage element at ~~the~~^a location designated by a destination address to a location designated by ~~a~~^{the} destination address in a snapshot storage element;

copying said new data chunk from said journal to a location designated by said production storage element;

wherein while off-line producing said updated snapshot copy said host is released to handle said I/O operations;

means for controlling a snapshot storage element;

means for controlling a production storage element; and,

means for controlling a journal.

36. (Original) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said snapshot storage element is at least one of: a virtual volume, a physical storage device.

37. (Original) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said production storage element is at least one of: a virtual volume, a physical storage device.

38. (Original) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said physical storage device comprises at least one of: tape drive, tape library, optical drive, disk, redundant array of independent disks (RAID).

39. (Original) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said journal includes at least one non-volatile random access memory (NVRAM) unit.

40. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said I/O operations comprise at least a read request.

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Original) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said apparatus is a storage controller.

43. (Original) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said apparatus is a virtualization switch connected in a storage area network (SAN).

44. (Cancelled)

45. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein executing said read request comprises the steps of:

a) checking if a data chunk requested to be read resides in said journal;

b) retrieving said data chunk from said journal and further sending said data chunk to said host, if said data chunk resides in said journal; and

c) retrieving said data chunk from said storage element and further sending said data chunk to said host, if said data chunk does not reside in said journal.

46. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein checking if said data chunk resides in said journal further comprises:

checking whether a changes table includes an entry associated with said data chunk.

47. - 48. (Cancelled)

49. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of ~~claim 45~~claim 35, wherein said performing on-line said further comprises

sending a response message ending the execution of said write request to said host.

50. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 49, wherein off-line producing said updated snapshot copy further comprises:

a) checking using said change table if said data chunk resides in the snapshot storage element at the destination address was modified since a last time said updated snapshot copy was updated; and

b) copying said new data chunk from said journal to said production storage element, if said data chunk at the destination address has been modified.